

PREFACE.

must direct the mind in the selection of these ideas, leaving to the intellect the task of adapting the dress of rhetoric to the thoughts of the sonneteer.

There is no mental attainment that can surpass that of composition, for composition has power over the material of thought and supplies an aptness in all matters of arrangement, of argumentation, and of facility of expression. This mastership of composition belongs only to him who is trained to the habit of industry, of self-sacrifice, and practice, for:—

“True grace in writing comes from art, not chance,
As they move easiest who have learned to dance.”

The writer of these sonnets possesses many of these endowments and acquirements, and he has been singularly successful in weaving them into the texture of his meritorious verses—into a pleasing, poetic dress. To rhythm and cadence he is, as a rule, faithful, and in the general scope and spirit of his compositions he is happily at his best. Whether the beautiful and luxuriant world of his dreams and the gilded palaces of his poetic thought, within which he heaps his treasures, be ample compensation for his hours of labor, his watch, and vigil, he, of course, must be the appellate judge.

As we would expect, some of these sonnets are of a superior order, and for strength, clearness, sweetness, and beauty of finish rank in good company. If this expression of appreciation appear extravagant, let the